The Secret to Creating a Sustainable Weight Loss Mindset

Fitness involves both your body and mind. In the last lesson, you learned how to strengthen your willpower to take action to cut calories. This lesson shows you how you can use the power of your mind to help keep the pounds off. Use these tips to develop your long-term game plan for sustainable weight loss.

Changing the Way You Think about Eating

1. **Choose foods you like.** With so many nutritious foods to choose from, there are bound to be plenty that appeal to you. If lima beans make you want to gag, try chickpeas instead.

2. **Eat a balanced diet.** You may be able to survive for a few days on grapefruit and red onions. On the other hand, you'll need to cover every food group when you're planning for the years ahead.

3. **Know your caloric needs.** Many factors determine how much food you need. **Calculate the target calories for yourself based on your height, weight, age, and metabolism.**

4. **Evaluate the impact of weight fluctuations.** You'll be less tempted to get sidetracked by crash diets when you understand what they do to your body. Dramatic weight changes can increase your body fat and weaken your bones.

Changing the Way You Think About Your Body and Physical Activities

1. **Befriend your body. Appreciate your body regardless of your current size.** Be grateful for all it does for you. You'll take more pleasure in being active and treating yourself well.

2. **Enjoy physical activity.** Select physical activities that you'll look forward to doing. Maybe you'd enjoy getting together with friends after work to shoot hoops. Maybe your idea of a good time is volleyball on the beach.

3. **Plan for all seasons.** Summer heat and winter storms sabotage many activities. Plan alternatives you can turn to when the weather changes. Flexibility will also see you through other obstacles, such as frequent travel or illnesses.

Changing the Way You Think about Living

1. **Consider your future self.** It seems harmless to slack off in the short-term, but the consequences add up. Multiply two hours a day of snacking and watching TV by 365 days in a year. Imagine how much better you'd feel if you spent that time walking and preparing salads.

2. **Manage stress. Keeping stress under control will enhance your sleep and reduce emotional eating.** Develop relaxation practices that work for you, such as meditation or listening to instrumental music.

3. **Form new habits.** Eating green vegetables becomes a snap when you make such actions automatic. About three weeks is usually all it takes to turn a positive intention into a reflex.

4. **Seek support.** We can all accomplish more when we work together. Invite your family and friends to join you in shaping up.

5. **Break down big tasks.** Losing a large amount of weight can seem overwhelming until you segment your goals into weekly or monthly units. Talk with your doctor about the best approach for your individual needs.

6. **Be mindful. Living mindfully transforms all of our experiences.** You'll see that you can be happy and peaceful eating Brussel sprouts. You'll be content with what you're doing now, instead of getting lost in the past or future.

Adopting a positive attitude will help you to eat less and become more active for the rest of your life. Think about how you can go the distance and enjoy staying in tip top shape.

Now that you're ready to move forward with actionable strategies to tackle your triggers and a positive mindset for maintaining your target weight, the last lesson, where we'll summarize and reflect on the lessons in Module 2, is coming up next.

Here's what you need to do today:

Plan for your long-term success! Pull out your food-journal to find a typical day for you, or write down what you've eaten today. If you repeated the same patterns every day for

the next five years, will you be where you want to be with reference to your weight? What would you like to change? What habits will you eliminate, modify, or add to make this change?